

CATS



NEWSLETTER

The Official Journal of the Capital Area Timex/Sinclair Users Group

Presidential Ramblings

Well, it appears that there is life in the old girl yet. A turnout of 16 members, all of whom were full of ideas about how and what should be done to keep the group going made for a long session of idea-voicing and discussion. At times it became difficult to QL (quell) a vociferous member so that others could have a chance at voicing their ideas.

We did not solve the problem of officering (if there is such a verb) the club, but we sure came up with a lot of ideas for workshops or presentations or even articles for the newsletter. Thanks are due to our arm-twister par excellence, Tom Robbins, who volunteered to again honcho the scheduling of presentations, workshops, etc. He, more or less, demanded that each person present tell what his interest was and what he was prepared to pass on to the membership, in some form or other.

A long overdue idea was voiced by Bob Diggs, namely, that it was a problem for him (and certainly others) to tear down his QL setup at home, load it into the car, unload it at the library, set it up, give a demo, tear it down, load it, unload it at home, and set it up again. Awkward, difficult, and something which could be made easier. The club could have a setup - basic QL - available, so that one would only need to bring special items to make a presentation. Hey, everyone said, what a great idea so suiting action to words, we (almost) unanimously voted to purchase a QL, monitor, and drives at an extremely attractive price. This will be kept in the locked storeroom in a locked container-- just in case-- and will be used for presentations.

One theme voiced was the dissatisfaction with structured meetings and the time lost, which were better applied to technical interchange, demos, etc. A business meeting every three meetings seemed appropriate.

Re the newsletter, it will be issued several more times with whatever articles are available (may be SlimPickens) and it will probably continue as an on-line newsletter with articles on file as they are received. This idea pushes the art of modeming and the next meeting will have a presentation on the use of QLINK for our less modemwise members. More to come on this.

Sharing! For all QL/QDOS users. Get-together in Newport, RI, 5 June 1993, from 1PM to 6PM, at the Salvation Army Building on Memorial Boulevard. Sponsor is International QL Report. Optional Dutch Treat Dinner (you pay) follows at Newport Beach Club. Expected demonstrators/attendees; Stuart Honeyball of Miracle Systems; Frank Davis of Mechanical Affinity; Bill Cable of Wood and Wind Computing; possibles are Freddy Vachha of Digital Precision, Tony Firshman of TF Services, and Dilwyn Jones of Dilwyn Jones Computing. Demonstrations, tables to browse/buy at, and a Q&A session. Pre-register at \$3/person or pay 5 at the door. Additional info from Bob Dyl at 401-849-3805.

We barely had time for Joe Miller to present his swinging 2068 playing music. His hurried exposition passed mostly right over my head, but I am personally 2068-disadvantaged anyway. If you want, Joe, we will give you more time for another shot.

No one answered my question: Who wants to be President?

 *Modems*

Next!

Point of View --- It's a Bad Idea, Now or Anytime

Last month a motion was made and passed by a relatively large group of members which would eliminate monthly meetings for CATS, save for quarterly catch-ups.

One of the members stated emphatically he does not like to sit through boring meetings, and enough support was garnered to cancel all but two or three business sessions the rest of this calendar year.

The same member declared that to him the most important thing is the group's informal bull sessions each month. "Business" is therefore secondary and dispensable.

A reality check will show that the CATS Bylaws clearly call for monthly business meetings, among other regularly scheduled happenings. A serious deviation such as this requires that an amendment to the Bylaws be proposed, published in the newsletter, and affirmed or denied a month later. So the motion passed month has no actual standing until it follows that path.

Nor should it.

CATS often has significant business to transact, much of it unpredictable as to when it will occur and what it will contain. No provision was made for this in last month's motion.

If business meetings currently last too long, that is the joint responsibility of the management (President) and the membership. It is not necessary to hear what everybody thinks about everything all the time before doing anything. A more practical approach would be to limit such meetings to 30 or, at most, 45 minutes. What doesn't get covered can be carried over to the next month.

Conversely, if there are no significant matters on the docket, the President always has the option

of dispensing with a business meeting altogether.

For while some members may chafe at the thought of sitting through parliamentary gyrations (rare though they may be), there are many more who expect a kind of structure and substance from CATS that exceeds endless, aimless bull sessions.

We have made arrangements with the library system to have the use of the conference room at New Carrollton library from noon onwards, just for the purpose of facilitating informal interchange. In fact, we have been told we can have the use of the room at 11 a.m. if we want it, or even 10 a.m., for that matter.

Last calendar year, with the same arrangements, nobody ever showed up before noon. Travel considerations of course entered into this, but the point remains that the bull sessions were largely unattended at the early times, even though the room was available.

So now the bull-throwers want to jettison the CATS business meetings?

That would be a giant step on the path to degradation---and the eventual extermination of CATS.

No longer will CATS be an organization with a purpose and a modicum of organizational stability. It will simply be an unannounced, random gathering of people without a purpose, becoming incrementally more unattractive as time goes by.

It should be imperative that the hard core of CATS enthusiasts consider realistically the consequences of what is being proposed. For to follow that path would accelerate dramatically the certain demise of CATS as we know it.

C.H.D.

FUTURISTICS

by George Rey

Looking ahead is an art, useful if you wish to optimize your time, money and efforts. I've done it for a living. I also do it to survive. This first of a series is to help bring into focus the information exchange technologies that have and will flood the planet. Your QL or PC is your link, window, ticket or personal interactive center to take advantage of new trends. Keep it.

Information is a common language of our global village -- From the Gobi desert to the high Andes you can find third world citizens interacting with us in D.C., New York or L.A., through our videos and broadcasts.

As I see it there are three major technological areas headed for convergence. These are television, telecommunications, and computers. Sight, sound, and mind (in the data processing sense). Already being proposed are 'Information Highways'. Such to be provided by our Cable, Telephone, and Cellular Network companies.

The ideal convergence should result in a single 'Black Box' capability to do what each service can do alone and then more by doing all together. Although this is coming rapidly I am not sure there is a user market unless the cost is reasonable. After all I still do not dole out tribute fees for Cable-TV much less have an IBM PC nor let my Bell pay my monthly bills for a fee.

If 'CATS' have nine lives my comments at the April meeting should not of been interpreted in an apocalyptic sense. Rather, as an urgency for us to restructure, and we did a lot of it at the

meeting. As Captain Kirk would say "Our mission is to search and explore the magic 'Black Box'.

What do we want a 'Box' to do? I for one want video and audio with communications to interface and interact with the world around me. And, of course I'll need a central module (PC) to bring it all together for me through these 'Nova' synthetic supplementing senses rather than using my own and letting my module (mind) make its own unaided analyses.

In the course of exploring all this I will raise many questions for us to ponder -- especially addressing the practicality of what's being offered at the time and price. We Sinclair users are by definition prudent as well as practical and we want our 'Ford' at Model-T prices and not at AT&T prices.

Hopefully, our club members will keep abreast with info related to these converging areas and tutor me some since I am not an electron.

As for Fax machines, I knew what a Fax was before Xerox made them obsolete -- so it's new now? Like how? Is it more economical than the mail? If so will it be the mailing medium of the future? Considering my in-law paid \$ 600 for one it must be a wonder machine -- is it? Or maybe its a fad? .

In my next article, 'Facts and Figures', I'll present some of the terminology I have run across -- some of it is mind boggling but interesting, provocative and holds promises. It should leads us to note that there are really big changes in the wind and as PC'ers we may be able to tap into the 'Nova' trends at reasonable costs using our existing core systems.

The Capital Area Times/Sinclair Users Group is a not-for-profit group devoted to serving the interests of those who own, use, or are interested in the Times/Sinclair family of computers.

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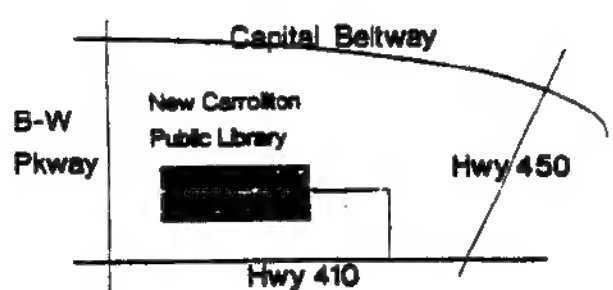
Newsletter

Memberships cost \$15 per year, are good for 12 months and include all privileges (access to libraries, group buys, etc.). A newsletter-only subscription is available for persons living outside the Washington Metro area and is \$12 per year.

Meetings

Monthly meetings are held from 11:00AM to 4:30 PM on the second Saturday of each month at the New Carrollton Public Library.

CATS Newsletter
 P.O. Box 11017
 Takoma Park, MD 20913



The next meeting of CATS will be held on: May 8, 1993
 12:00 M Hardware Workshop
 2:00 PM General Meeting

At: New Carrollton Public Library 7414 Riverdale Road (Hwy 410), New Carrollton, MD

IF YOU ARE NOT A MEMBER OF CATS. THIS IS THE ONLY ISSUE YOU WILL RECEIVE